

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
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FOI/PA# 1372277-0

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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

REPORTING OFFICE WASHINGTON FIELD	OFFICE OF ORIGIN BUREAU	DATE 7/15/76	INVESTIGATIVE PERIOD 5/20/76 - 7/15/76
TITLE OF CASE DOUGLAS DE WITT BAZATA HQ 5136		REPORT MADE BY SA [REDACTED]	TYPED BY bab
		CHARACTER OF CASE NRC-A	b6 b7C

REFERENCE: Bureau letter to WFO, 5/18/76;
 Portland nitel, 6/14/76;
 Philadelphia nitel, 6/15/76;
 WFO nitel, 6/17/76;
 WFO nitel, 6/19/76;
 Detroit nitel, 6/22/76;
 Buairtel to WFO, 6/21/76;
 WFO nitel, 6/25/76;
 Seattle nitel, 6/25/76.

-RUC-
RET

APR 8 1981

BY: *McF**Spec Request*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS CLAIMED					<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NONE	ACQUIT- TALS	CASE HAS BEEN:
CONVIC.	PRETRIAL DIVERSION	FUG.	FINES	SAVINGS	RECOVERIES		PENDING OVER ONE YEAR <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
							PENDING PROSECUTION OVER SIX MONTHS <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

APPROVED
COPIES MADE:SPECIAL AGENT
IN CHARGE

DO NOT WRITE IN SPACES BELOW

3-Bureau (116-477098) (Encls. *4*)

1-WFO (116-150038)

DIAL 104
SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE
BUREAU

116-477098-41 REC-87

NOT RECORDED

24 SEP 28 1976

ST-105

Dissemination Record of Attached Report

Agency	<i>WFO</i>	<i>WFO</i>	<i>WFO</i>
Request Recd.	<i>WFO</i>	<i>WFO</i>	<i>WFO</i>
Date Fwd.	<i>WFO</i>	<i>WFO</i>	<i>WFO</i>
How Fwd.	<i>WFO</i>	<i>WFO</i>	<i>WFO</i>
By	<i>WFO</i>	<i>WFO</i>	<i>WFO</i>

Notations

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR
ADD. DISSEMINATION.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Copy to:

Report of: SA [REDACTED]

Date: July 15, 1976

Office: Washington, D.C.

b6
b7C

Field Office File #: 116-150038

Bureau File #: 116-477098

Title: DOUGLAS DE WITT BAZATA

Character: NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION-APPLICANT

Synopsis: Employment at Patton Turf Farm verified. Supervisor and co-workers favorable. References COLBY, [REDACTED] CONEIEIN, WOLFE, KNOX, CYR recommended. Ex-wife, Mrs. ZAZACCA recommends. Reference VAN ROIJEN would not hire him, and therefore would not recommend. Reference PIETSCH unavailable. No credit rating. Traffic record located for left turn violation, May 25, 1972, for applicant. No other criminal or traffic record located for applicant, current wife or ex-wife. No record CSC. No record of divorce located Civil Docket Section, U.S. District Court. No record Office of Security, Department of State. No record located in Personnel Records Branch, Department of State.

b6
b7C

-RUC-

ENCLOSURES: Exhibit A 1 copy newspaper article appearing in "The Sunday Star and The News", 9/17/72 entitled DOUGLAS BAZATA --A MANY FACETED MAN, by JOY BILLINGTON.

Exhibit B 1 copy newspaper article appearing in "The Washington Post", 6/6/76 entitled "I Learned to Keep a Secret", by GORDON CHAPLIN.

DETAILS: AT WASHINGTON, D.C.EMPLOYMENT

411

WFO 116-150038

RJH:dlg

1

J.T. Patton Turf Farm
701 Norwood Road
Silver Spring, Maryland

The following investigation at J.T. Patton Turf Farm, Silver Spring, Maryland was conducted by SA [REDACTED] on June 2, 1976.

b6
b7C

[REDACTED] advised her employment records reveal that applicant, DOUGLAS D. BAZATA, date of birth February 17, 1911, was employed here as a Laborer from April 1, 1975, until the last week in September, 1975, when the employment was terminated at the end of the growing season. The record indicated that applicant is eligible for re-hire. His supervisor was shown as [REDACTED] of the firm. She said the record contained no additional pertinent information concerning BAZATA.

b6
b7C

[REDACTED] advised that she was acquainted with the applicant as a co-worker during the time he was employed here. She found him to be respectful and reliable. She had no information reflecting unfavorably on the character, associates, reputation or loyalty of BAZATA and had no information which would indicate to her he would not be responsible in a position of trust and confidence with the U.S. Government.

b6
b7C

[REDACTED], advised he served as applicant's immediate supervisor during the summer of 1975, when applicant was employed here as a Laborer handling Mower and Sprayer equipment. He said applicant was a very reliable and conscientious employee and a very good worker. He would definitely re-hire applicant should he re-apply for employment here. [REDACTED] explained that turf farming is seasonal work and applicant's employment terminated in September of 1975, at the end of the growing season. He commented favorably concerning the character, associates, reputation and loyalty of BAZATA and recommended him for a position of trust and confidence with the U.S. Government.

b6
b7C

WFO 116-150038

RWT:bab

1

Hoover Vacuum Company
Dupont Circle
Washington, D.C.

The following investigation was conducted by
SA [] on June 3, 1976.

b6
b7C

Attempts to locate Hoover Vacuum Company through
checks of local directories and city directories were negative.
It is noted the applicant listed employment for the period
1938 through 1942 and efforts to locate supervisor []
[] also met with negative results.

b6
b7C

WFO 116-150038

RLH:dlr

1

REFERENCE

b6

b7C

[redacted], advised SA [redacted] on June 9, 1976 that he met the applicant in the middle 1950's when this individual was living in Europe. He stated that he had contact with applicant at that time over business matters. [redacted] stated that he has visited with the applicant and his family on approximately several occasions since he returned to the United States and he has met the applicant's wife during these contacts. [redacted] stated that applicant is an intelligent, competent individual and one who in his opinion is qualified to handle a position of responsibility with the United States Government. He advised the applicant has worked with intelligence information during his war time activities and he considers him to be a close person with unquestionable loyalty to the United States. [redacted] stated the applicant enjoys an excellent reputation and maintains proper associates and from his personal observations he would recommend him favorably for a position in every respect.

WFO 116-150038

JHM:gmb

1

On June 4, 1976, LUCIEN E. CONEIEIN, Colonel, Retired, U.S. Army, who is employed as Acting Chief, Special Operations and Field Support, Office of Intelligence, Drug Enforcement Administration, U.S. Department of Justice, advised SA [REDACTED] he has known DOUGLAS BAZATA since 1943. b6 b7C He said they served together in the same U.S. Army Parachute Unit during World War II. They have maintained contact since that time although he has not been in personal association with the applicant for about the past 1½ years. He said he knew the applicant to be an extremely intelligent man, extremely honest and unquestionably a loyal American citizen of the highest type character and associates. He noted that the applicant was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross by U.S. Government for his service "behind enemy lines" and that the French Government awarded him the Croix de Guerre. He stated he has great personal and professional regards for the applicant and would not hesitate to vouch for him in any manner. He said the applicant is unquestionably well qualified for government employment in a position of trust and confidence. He said he could verify employment of the applicant during the approximate period June, 1947 to September, 1968, when he worked as a consultant for the Mumm Champagne Company in Johannisberg, Germany, and as an artist. He said that the Mumm Champagne Company at that time was owned by Barron VON MUMM and his WIFE, barronness MADELEIN VON MUMM, both of whom were also personal acquaintances of Coneiein. He said he was also aware of the applicant's work as an artist and knew there have been several art exhibitions of his work in several cities in the U.S. and in Europe. He said he met the applicant's first wife, DIANA on one occasion about 1943, but knew nothing concerning her other than she owned one or two beauty parlors at that time. He said he was not familiar with details of the applicant's marriages or divorces. He said his only knowledge of the applicant's present wife was a casual meeting in 1970. He said he had no further contact with her. He stated he could furnish no additional information concerning activities or employments of the applicant.

WFO 116-150038

RWT:mer

1

The following investigation was conducted by

SA

b6
b7C

b3
b7E

WFO 116-150038

RJH:alg

1

Numerous attempts have been made to contact Col.
WILLIAM PIETSCH, 4205 Saul Road, Kensington, Maryland, with
negative results.

WFO 116-150038

RWT:bab

1

CREDIT AND POLICE AGENCIES

SC [] caused a search to be made of the files of the Credit Bureau, Incorporated, Washington, D.C., and was advised on May 25, 1976, that the files contained no credit rating for the applicant.

b6
b7C

On May 21, 1976, SC [] determined that no arrest record was contained in the Metropolitan Police Department files concerning the applicant or [] or his Ex-spouse, DIANE CHIRIELEISON []
BAZATA.

b6
b7C

It is to be noted that at all times an indefinite number of unidentified records are out of file and not available for review.

On May 21, 1976, SC [] determined that a record was contained in the Department of Transportation, Bureau of Motor Vehicle Services, Government of the District of Columbia files concerning the applicant:

b6
b7C

On May 25, 1972, a citation was issued by the Traffic Division, Metropolitan Police Department, Washington, D.C., for violation no left turn. Applicant's listed address on permit for this period was 550 South Dupont Park, 'New Cas, ... DE.', no zip code. Disposition is shown as convicted by plea with no points assessed. His date of birth was indicated as February 17, 1911.

The file contained no record for the wife or ex-wife.

On May 21, 1976, SC [] searched the files of the U.S. Park Police and no identifiable adult criminal or traffic record could be located regarding the applicant or above listed spouse and ex-spouse.

b6
b7C

On May 24, 1976, SC [] caused a search to be made of the files of the Montgomery County, Maryland Police Department and was advised that no identifiable adult criminal record could be located regarding the applicant or above listed spouse and ex-spouse.

b6
b7C

WFO 116-150038

FWT:bab

1

MISCELLANEOUS

SC [] caused a search to be made of the files of the Bureau of Personnel Investigations, Civil Service Commission, and was advised on May 24, 1976, that no record was found concerning the applicant.

b6
b7C

WFO 116-150038

RWT:maw

1

SC [] caused a check to be made of the files of the Civil Docket Section, U.S. District Court, and was advised on May 21, 1976, that there was no record of the divorce for applicant for the period from 1942 through 1949.

b6
b7C

WFO 116-150038

RWT:bab

1

SA [] caused a search to be made of the files of the Office of Security, Department of State, and was advised on May 26, 1976, that no record was found concerning the applicant.

b6
b7C

WFO 116-150038

WOM:mjl

1

The following investigation was conducted by
SA [REDACTED], on June 1, 1976:

b6
b7C

Personnel Records Branch, United States
Department of State, contained no record for DOUGLAS DEWITT
BAZATA.

The Sunday Star
AND The News

WASHINGTON, D.C.
SEPTEMBER 17, 1972

portfolio

1

THE MINI PAGE

F

Douglas Bazata—A Many-Faceted Man

By JOY BILLINGTON

Star-News Staff Writer

Salvador Dali once drew Douglas Bazata as Don Quixote. Whether the particular chap who inspired it was Bazata the spy, the heavyweight boxer, the poker player or the painter, seems immaterial. For years later, at 61, the man is still tilting at windmills.

To a tiny, rented house in Arlington, a soldier of fortune from Pennsylvania has come home to America, briefly, to write his autobiography.

On the white walls of his living room gleam the remains of six months' work in a rare and dying art form, lacquer, which Douglas Bazata studied over six months in Vietnam.

recently. Of the 36 lacquers he made there, these few are all that are left.

U.S. Ambassador to Paris Arthur Watson has several. The Central Intelligence Agency's number three man, William E. Colby, Bazata's old Office of Strategic Services mate, has some. The rest were stolen as he left Saigon.

One night not long ago, seven

former OSS men, including Colby and the noted Saigon cloak-and-dagger man, Col. Lucien Conein, gathered to celebrate Baz's return to his homeland.

As old tales circled the room, some of the many lines in the multi-life of the tall, silver-haired artist

Continued on Page F-2

ENCLOSURE

EXHIBIT A

116-177098-41

Douglas Bazata— Many-Faceted Man

Continued From Page F-1
crossed and recrossed.

Vietnam, where many of those past and present splatters were wheeled and dealed, was represented by the lacquers.

In another room, the autobiography was several chapters along.

In the studio were two huge ovals of oysters, his continuing crustacea series, stretching back many years.

In the living room, his willowy French wife, Marie-Pierre (formerly Baroness Sene-

quier de Crozet) moved among the guests with elegant poise through her hairless chignon—his 17th wife, Bazata claims.

Crustacea, women and cats he adores. Like the cat, he has had many lives. One of them has been lived through, a brush.

In Vietnam reside the last true craftsmen of lacquer, Bazata says.

"The Chinese went 'off' lacquer a hundred years ago. The 'mimicking' Japanese went

completely 'machined' as did the Koreans.

"So following a desire to create lacquers I'd had for as long as three dozen years, I spent six months as a 'porter' in two factories."

At one was the "Father of Lacquer," Nguyen Van Triem, "an 80-pipe-a-day man" (opium). After two hours of formalities every morning, his workers started to knead the lacquers, "back and forth eternally for a few pennies a day."

"And the assistants to the

masters, they had no hopes of ever doing anything in life but that one red flower, or butterfly, or whatever, that was their thing.

"They are all craftsmen, not artists, and very stubborn and docile. Traditional, repetitive craftsmen. But there's my esthetic prejudice rearing its ugly head..."

Lacquer techniques have changed since the introduction of plywood. The ancient Chinese lacquers, built upon ordinary wood or even of pure lacquer, thousands of coats thick, warp with time and change of atmosphere.

But modern Vietnamese "contre plaques" built on African plywood, with the plys at cross-right angles, as Bazata explains it, are lacquered with 60 coats, covered with silk, as a foundation.

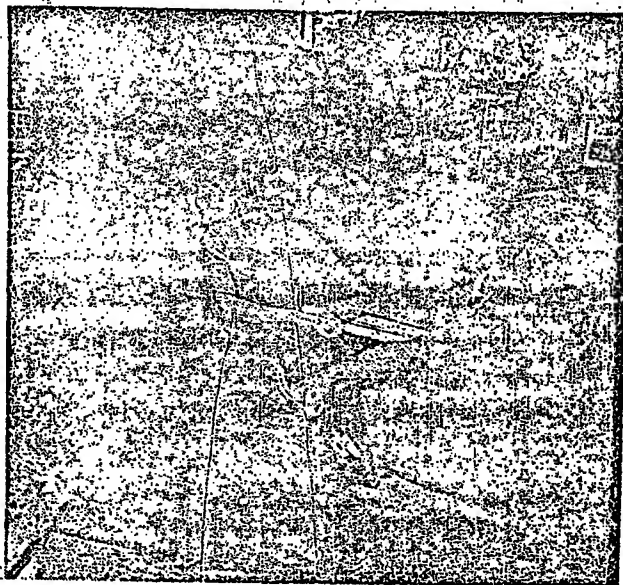
The actual lacquer is sap from the tree "Rhus Vernicifera," he says, "not from..." (here he lists a dozen other trees). "It took me many gritty weeks to elicit even the name of this tree, and then I went outside Saigon to study them. They have to be 10 years old before tapping. The sap is white to grayish, later turning into black treacle."

"Between each layer of lacquer there are drying periods, herding periods, sandings, hand rubbings, polishings with powdered charcoal and last with iron."

The wily master, Baz says, insisted on giving him 10th grade lacquer to work with. Persisting, he found the best.

"These chaps would have no dealings with modernity, thus I was forced to fight them with bally techniques, which, of course, those flat noses loathed..."

He "bullied" at least one



—Star-News Photographer John Bowden

Douglas and Marie-Pierre Bazata lead a tropical existence in their Arlington back garden.

master craftsman to follow him one step beyond tradition. In his own vivid words:

"I laid the panel flat down on a level surface, poured gasoline over the entire surface, until shimmering in quick evaporation. Then, in total speed, with any weapon, I painted my thing. This had to be executed instantly. Everything moved. And everything had to be learned and controlled. Often, I'd sling pure gasoline against or with the arriving art. It was no problem to master this control. You spear a slice of tomato without aiming or trembling. So I quickly had the measure of the fluid paintings in this vanishing medium."

Bazata started, in oils, in 1866. He was living in Germany then, on the estate of Baron (champagne) Mumm, where he stayed 21 years after World War II. For the

baron, he built a stately garden at the Rhine-side estate.

His soldier-of-fortune days were over. He was 45 years old. "I sat down to plan what a person my age could do, completely alien and new, and not become an old fogey."

To avoid making it easy, he decided "to do everything through obstacles"—like already painted canvases, blunt knives, misshapen brushes ("preferably stolen—I love to steal"), painting only at night, on the floor. "I never sleep myself."

The Duchess of Windsor owns one of his paintings, as does Princess Grace of Monaco, who was patron of his Monaco show in the Monte Carlo Casino.

The list of owners of his paintings reads like the Almanach de Gotha: barons and princes galore. Over past

years, he has exhibited many times in France, Germany and England.

His 1969 London show included these titles: "Gwen Cafritz Dancing Versus the Honorable Philippe C...." She at Le pirate. He at le Palais. "Cute Lil' Ole' Princess L.... Declaims the Final Three No Trump." Both were semi-abstract portraits.

"Dall once predicted I'd become the highest paid painter in the world—but it never came true," he grins.

However, casual about possessions (his own and other people's) he always makes out, Bazata says. He recently got a new Cadillac from General Motors in exchange for a painting. He once won \$25,000 in a poker game, and spent it all living at London's most blue-blooded hotel, Claridges.

He refused, he says, to sell

his lacquers in Saigon. "Ambassador Watson 'coerced' me into parting with four. Then, those other laqs were stolen," he shrugs his shoulders in a very French way.

To quote from some autobiography material:

"I spent two years as a sailor when a youth merely to stare at the oceans from the divers' prows. Did I see the sea? The detailed flying fishes? Numbered waves? The closeup rail or the far off waterspout? Never! I felt day-dreamed, communicated and wept. For this was but half of art. There was no man thereby. I vowed to paint, communicate so, to all men in my range type. Alas: This is limited to perhaps 3,000 persons, out of nigh to 4,000 million earthlings, not including the adored cats and crabs. Sad."

Bazata's Other Eight Lives

The most repeated tale about Bazata in spy circles is the "mushroom story," told by British espionage agent (MIs), George Reed Millar in his book "Marquis." He and Bazata, an Office of Strategic Services agent, were in a field with some farmers surrounded by Germans, in France in 1944. They dropped to their knees and pretended to be picking mushrooms.

Bazata, who spoke no French or German at that time, picked his way casually to the boots of a German sergeant. "Excuse me," he said in English, picking his way out of danger, as the Germans moved aside.

Today, if you ask how he managed behind enemy lines without French or German (which he now speaks fluently), he shrugs his shoulders. "The Germans are real clowns."

His radio messages were inhibited. He only knew A-to-M of the Morse alphabet, sufficient for the job, he felt.

BAZATA RECEIVED the Distinguished Service Cross from General George Patton, the Croix de Guerre from General Charles de Gaulle and an English mention in dispatches.

In France, Bazata commanded 18,000 Maquis. "Mrs. Hoover's Girl Scouts would have done a better job than they did. Still, I lived very well those years and drank some magnificent wines."

To understand, or rather to dimly perceive how Bazata got to be such an irreverent swashbuckling, baroque character, it helps to know that he left home to tackle the world at the age of 11.

His father was a Presbyterian clergyman from Wrightsville, Pa. But he was also a great athlete, a "Hall of Fame" man named by California (after he gave up the church and moved there) "one of the 42 great athletes of California." He later raised polo ponies on 12 ranches. So Douglas Bazata grew up rich.

"I was big for my age. I think my father might even have agreed to my going to sea. Anyway, by the time I was 15, I'd been around the world."

He was three times a cowboy, once a lumberjack, dog-catcher in Syracuse, sewer cleaner during the Depression — to pay his way through college. He taught various subjects, "including" a class in Thievery/Robbery.

"Bummed for two years, utterly poetique," he adds.

"And in Washington once I was Hoover service manager while owning 14 small appliance shops to scoop up the depressed and homeless gals who at length scorned lovely Hoover, etc. I slept with 90 percent of Washington in that period."

He became a soldier, a mercenary, "in many armies — Nicaragua, Haiti, Santa Domingo, Cuba ("I knew Batista when he was a corporal").

"I served four years and four months in the Marine Corps. The four months was

in the 'brig' on the U.S.S. Wyoming, because I'd punched a captain in the nose. The temperature was 147 degrees, below the waterline. In solitary. What year? About 1931."

AT ONE STAGE of the game, he was heavyweight champion of the Marine Corps, fighting exhibition bouts with Jack Johnson, Max Baer and Primo Carnera.

Much later, he says, someone wanted to make him a general. "The last thing I wanted to do was become a lousy Boy Scout. So I became a spy. We were 38 Americans, commanded by the British, thank heavens, because they knew the business."

After the War, he was involved in the planning of two books. The first was the official U.S. history of the Normandy Campaign. Bazata joined six professional historians for the project.

About the same time, Bazata recalls that Gen. "Wild Bill" Donovan, the head of OSS, asked him to help write a book about the OSS.

"We gathered all the agents together and they voted that Bill Colby, now of CIA (the Central Intelligence Agency) and I should represent them. Donovan wanted me to tell our story to Ernest Hemingway,

who was to ghost it. I was to tell him all our secrets."

"WELL, AFTER living with Hemingway for two weeks, I went to Donovan and said, 'Hemingway's a total phony. He has a lot of charm, but he only says one thing—the old man and the young girl—over and over again, which isn't bad, but for our story, he's substituting Ernest Hemingway over and over again for the people in it.' The book was given to another writer, and then a change of policy cancelled it before it was written."

Later again, Bazata wanted to write an expose of American strategic conduct during the War. Truman's Secretary of the Army Gordon Gray talked him out of it.

He has tales of how the war could have ended two months earlier, "but nobody wanted to hear them, in 1972." Tales of bridge and poker games when he was down \$50,000 and managed to recoup, and win \$5,000, in a game with six Vietnamese. He outcheated them.

Bazata, with a straight face, says that he loves to steal. "No one ever gives you your due, so why not? I love to steal enormous stacks of com-

post from outside super markets. Almost everything I have in my house is stolen. I'm teaching Mario-Pierre to steal, aren't I, cherie?"

HIS YOUNG WIFE blinks, then grins.

"I've no sense of property, and no civil responsibility. I'll drive through a red light." (Actually, he appears to drive very carefully.)

While he says he has been married 17 times ("More than 10, I'm sure. I don't count.") his friends say he has only been married four times.

So, in places, his lines between the reality of all the things he has done and the few he hasn't, blur. Or perhaps just the legalities. His time sense is understandably misty, since so much has been done over so long. And he loves to shock.

Just a few years ago, when he had a show in Paris, Bazata was asked to sign a petition with Picasso and many other famous names.

"I'm afraid I got myself into great trouble. Their message was 'I HATE WAR.' I painted a sign outside the gallery where my paintings were showing, 'I LOVE WAR.' You're not supposed to say that."

"I Learned To Keep A Secret"

"And it was torture"

By Gordon Chaplin

I had been prowling on the fringes of the great Washington secrets bazaar for about two weeks before I met Douglas Bazata. He was one of the old boys of the World War II intelligence net, they said, and he just might have something for me. One thing, though. . . Bazata was supposed to be a little on the bizarre side. But I shouldn't let that

put me off. After all, none of those cookie factory boys was exactly your average kid next door.

I wasn't looking for any particular secret, you understand. I was just browsing, as it were. Window shopping for some juicy peach of an item that had been ripening for thirty or forty years. But in the very gossip central of the country where secrets are passed across the dinner tables of inside story experts like so many English muffins, those kinds of items are rare indeed. Before I met Ba-

zata the best I could come up with was the name of the general who leaked Roosevelt's so-called war plans to the press just before Pearl Harbor. That turned out to have been well-known for years.

I met the grey-haired, moustachioed, 65-year-old Bazata in the 1789 Restaurant bar in Georgetown. Dressed in a houndstooth jacket, yellow v-necked sweater and flannels, he seemed very professorial until I noticed his marbly blue eyes

Continued on page 20

The Washington Post/Potomac/June 6, 1976

17

116-477078-41

EXHIBIT B

ENCLOSURE

Bazata, from page 17

rattling off the walls and the purse of his lips underneath the wispy hair. Across the table. Bazata's ghost writer from New York, Buck Moffett, sat smiling obliquely in his suede jacket. I wasn't sure what was going on, but then I was a newcomer to the secrets bazaar and I was prepared to stick it out for at least one round of drinks.

"I've been in the clandestine business for fifty years," Bazata said in a stage whisper. "I was one of Donovan's original thirty-eight." (Major General William J. Donovan organized the Office of Strategic Services in the early part of World War II to combine intelligence and resistance leadership. The OSS was the forerunner of the CIA and many former OSS officials are now with the Agency.)

"I could tell you more about Bill Colby than anybody in Washington. COLBY. (He blew a raspberry with his shielded lips.) He's privately secret, publicly honest. I'm the reverse. You know what, I think the ideal of secrecy ended when Colby talked to Fallaci. It's all over now, I tell you. Nothing is sacred anymore."

Bazata's monologue in the 1789 Restaurant gathered steam and soon he was using a kind of ribald referential shorthand that he proudly calls tripletalk. He explained that tripletalk was his way of dealing with the doubters, the stuffed shirts, the friends who turn out in the end to be enemies. It was in tripletalk: "an effort to be humorous. . . to stay unsomber and sad and dead. . . avoiding then the pompous / serious / pretentious thus so demanded by slaved man. . . to eliminate as weeds or mad dogs the clerks, meddlers, descendants from unemployed missionaries."

It seemed, unless he'd gone off his nut to the point where he was incoherent, that the triple talk was some kind of a test.

Through the thick snow of references I gathered that before the war he had run his own Washington intelligence gathering operation out of a Hoover vacuum cleaners sales and service office on Dupont Circle, peddling information among the embassies:

"Look, you think you got some weirdo in front of you,

but I'll say one thing: I cut corners. I'd always check in with some knowledgeable flunky in these embassies, I'd tell him, well you got your Hoover, you ought to be able to pick up a lot of CRUMBS. They'd pay me \$50 a shot. It was all very patriotic and aboveboard."

After the war, he said, Donovan told him to get Ernest Hemingway as a ghost, and he would open the OSS files for a book. "So I stayed with Hemingway for about two weeks talking to him about it but all he wanted to do was to write himself into the book. It was impossible. The whole time he had a towel around his head because he said he had hit a stanchion in a blackout." That book project fizzled, but a few months ago he got a contract from Bobbs-Merrill for his memoirs. His editor said he would be telling everything, including how Donovan had allegedly recommended liquidation of General George S. Patton Jr.

Well, Bazata sounded kind of intriguing, if even a quarter of the things he mentioned were true. But there was the problem of getting his eyes to stop rattling off the walls, to calm him down and get him to drop the tripe talk for just a few minutes.

"Look," I said. "If we meet again tomorrow, will you tell me some secrets?"

Bazata and the ghost-writer looked at each other. "I guess we can tell him about the suits," the ghost writer said.

"The suits. . . Anything else?"

"Sure. Maybe a couple of other things. Look, we'll tell you two secrets."

Two secrets sounded worth a couple more rounds of drinks at least, if Bazata was for real. I called Lucien Conein, a former OSS-CIA man who had been with Bazata in London during the war and later acted as the Agency's contact with the Vietnamese generals who ousted President Diem in 1963. There was a silence and then a heavy rumble over the phone lines that was Conein sighing:

"Aaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh,
Bazata the Beautiful."

My pickaxe seemed to have finally clanged home into the mother lode.

The next day I watched in fascination as Conein held a cigarette between the two huge stumps where his right forefingers used to be. Nobody except for his closest friends, I had been told, knew how he had lost those fingers. Conein's little office in the Special Operations Department of the Intelligence Section of the Drug Enforcement Agency vibrated at the sound of his voice: "Bahhhhhzatahhhhh. What a great, big, wonderful, high-talking son of a bitch. . ."

It turned out that after performing with the OSS as a Jedburgh, dropping into France ahead of the invading Allied armies and winning the Distinguished Service Cross and three Purple Hearts, Bazata had worked in Nuremburg "writing up confessions of Nazi generals," studied wine-making in Paris and somehow had got a job with the Mumm Champagne people, living in a chateau near Frankfurt and hobnobbing with the likes of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor and Prince and Princess Rainier. "I'd go there and visit him and drink all this \$300-a-bottle champagne. We'd tell lies to each other and open another bottle." Then Bazata went to Paris and became an "artist of some kind" and when Conein was moving around the byways of Vietnam, somehow Bazata showed up there too. He was making lacquerware.

"Lacquerware? Come on."

"Sure, lacquerware. He produced about ten pieces that I knew about. Now, he might have produced even more."

"He must have been doing something besides that."

Conein tilted his head back and let his mouth and eyelids droop until he looked exactly like Orson Welles. "Well, of course if he was working, that was his business. In the intelligence racket you are never surprised to see somebody, and you never ask them what they have been doing. If he was working I had no right to know about it. It was bad enough what I was doing."

Another OSS friend told me some Bazata anecdotes from the London days. One time Bazata, who was red-haired in those days, came to Donovan with an idea that now seems right out of Dr. Strangelove. The idea was to develop a combination rock-

et, bomb and parachute, with pedals. As Bazata described it, he would sit astride the rocket bomb, steering with his feet until it neared enemy territory; then he would aim it at the enemy and press a pedal that would catapult him toward the ground and open his parachute at the same time. The bomb would go on to land on the enemy and "I'd be safe enough," Bazata explained, "because I'd land outside the enemy defenses." Donovan didn't buy the plan, but at least he listened to it.

Another time, the OSS man said, Bazata and his partner in the French Maquis behind the lines found themselves in a heavy concentration of Germans. Dressed as peasants, they were trying to escape from a field surrounded by Germans by crawling along, picking mushrooms as they crawled. On the edge of the field, Bazata saw a German standing sternly with his legs far apart. His partner was horrified to see Bazata crawl through the German's legs and even more horrified to hear him excuse himself in English, clearly and politely.

I was impressed. And I was excited. It seemed that Bazata was even more real that I could have wished for. He had some secrets, he was writing a book, and he had chosen to let out a few of them in advance. It could be great, if only I could get through the tripletalk. The only thing I couldn't understand was *why*. Why had Bazata, who had kept his secrets well enough until now, decided to talk?

Bazata was already in his place when I came back to the 1789 Restaurant for the second time. Instead of being calmer, though, he seemed more skittish than before. His eyes were marbling around the room like twin balls in a pachinko game. The ghost writer was not around. We had a first beer and gradually the tripletalk started to flow.

I asked him why he was writing the book. "Because I need the money," he said. "But then I've needed the money before and I haven't written." It was a classic Bazata answer.

The secrets were slow in coming. After an hour of drinking, in fact, they seemed farther away than ever. He kept talking about

how we needed to get to know each other. "I can't be rushed," he said. "I have to go about this my own way."

It seemed to me that this was one of those situations that could string out indefinitely, if I let it. I had to be firm. Besides, I didn't have time to get to know Bazata that night.

I pulled out some money for the beers. "Let's stop wasting time. Do you want to go ahead, or do you want to call it quits?" It was a bluff.

Incredibly, Bazata was silent for almost a full minute. Then he turned and looked at me as if I was two feet tall. "You said I was wasting your time."

"No, I said we were both wasting our time."

"No. You said I was wasting *your* time."

Well, I seemed to have blown it, and to make matters worse I had never really been sure what he had wanted from me. Was it money? Or was it some kind of pledge of allegiance and good fellowship like they made in the old days? Whatever it was, he had called my bluff now and there was nothing left to do but pay the check and get out. As I was leaving, Bazata yelled after me: "They wanted me to kill Batista, but you wouldn't be interested in that." ■